



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

ENGLISH FINANCES UNDER THE LONG PARLIAMENT.

THE conservatism of the English people is nowhere more clearly shown than in their retention of a mediæval financial system far into modern times. For nearly three centuries their methods of taxation underwent no great change. The system of compounding for tenths and fifteenths, first employed for raising extraordinary revenue in 1334, continued in use till the accession of Charles I.,¹ not because it was an efficient means of getting money, but on account of the Englishman's dislike of change. By the end of the fifteenth century, therefore, English rulers were facing a serious problem. Throughout the following period the increasing activities of the modern State demanded additional expenditures, and at the same time the rise of prices was reducing the effectiveness of the fixed income for defraying the necessary disbursements. To bring Parliament to make the additional pecuniary sacrifice demanded by the new order of things was a task that gave the Tudors pause, despotic rulers as they were. Henry VII. consequently resorted to benevolences rather than ask for additional grants. Under his successor, subsidies came to supplement the tenths and fifteenths, but the yield fell far short of what was expected. The Tudor sovereigns, by being close-fisted, like Henry VII., or clever, like Henry VIII., or popular and parsimonious, like Elizabeth, managed to make headway without introducing too offensive innovations, and postponed the trouble which came in double measure upon the less practical Stuarts. In the seventeenth century it was no longer possible to keep the machinery of government in motion under the old revenue system. The writs for ship money, introduced by Charles I., proved, however, to be a remedy worse than the disease, and helped

¹ Dowell, *History of Taxation*, i. 123, 245.

to bring about the struggle between king and Parliament,—a struggle which produced as great a revolution in the financial as it did in the political system of England.

When the Civil War broke out in 1642, the existing fiscal machinery of the kingdom was swept away. The wealthier Royalists had a temporary financial advantage, and gave freely of their money, jewels, and abundant plate to equip the king with the sinews of war. The party of Parliament contributed no less eagerly, tho on a humbler scale. "The Rebels," says Captain John Stevens, that stout protagonist of the Royalists, writing in 1725, "as soon as they had by their insolences drove the King from London, they began to exercise their tyrannical Power, and setting their seditious Preachers to work, blew the People into such a Flame, that nothing but their own Ruin could please them. The City of London went foremost in all Mischief; their Money and Plate was found to carry on the Destruction of the Nation, the poorest Wenches being so eager for carrying on that good Cause, as they call'd it, as to throw in their silver Bodkins and Thimbles¹ for want of better Jewels."² To those who contributed to the Parliamentary cause the public faith was pledged for repayment, with interest at 8 per cent.³

When the first glow of war enthusiasm had died out, and it became evident that the struggle was to be long and serious, the Parliamentary party began to turn its attention to more systematic means for securing the necessary funds. With this end in view an order was issued in Parliament on November 14, 1642, for the appointment of committees, whose chief function was to raise money by loans.⁴ Twelve days later the Committee for the Advance of Money was appointed, consisting of sixteen members, of whom five

¹ These unpretentious contributions gained for the Parliamentary forces the epithet of "Thumble and Bodkin Army."

² Stevens, John, *An Historical Account of Taxes*, 2d edition, London, 1733, pp. 288-289.

³ Scobell, i. 40.

⁴ Lords' Journals, v. 445-446; Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee for the Advance of Money, 1642-1656, p. 1.

were peers and four were knights.¹ Additional members were appointed later. This committee, with a treasurer, clerk, registrar, legal counsellor, examiner of witnesses, and six collectors, held its meetings at first in the hall of the Haberdashers' Company in Gresham Street, hired for the purpose at a rent of £60, and later at the house of Sir William Bruncard, Old Palace or the Queen's Court, Westminster.² Its treasury, however, always remained at Haberdashers' Hall.

The Committee for the Advance of Money was the first organized fiscal machine of the Commonwealth, and the methods it employed had no precedent in the financial history of England. To procure the needed funds, it laid assessments, sometimes compulsory and sometimes voluntary, on the adherents of both parties, the rates being one-twentieth of the real and one-fifth of the personal property; and to every one who made a loan a public-faith, or Exchequer, bill was issued, pledging repayment. The assessments at first were confined to the vicinity of London, but, as the Parliamentary party gained in strength, the friendly counties began to send in contributions, and if any failed to contribute they were called to account.³ Parliament was at an advantage in having London on its side. Here much was done by the city officials to assist the committee in obtaining supplies. The Lord Mayor, Sir Isaac Pennington, and Sheriffs John Langham and Thomas Andrews, appointed a sub-committee of twenty-six for collecting assessments in the various wards. The members of this committee appointed their own assessors and collectors, and received weekly contributions.⁴ As the needs became more urgent, the authority of the Committee for the Advance of Money was gradually extended. As early as February 9, 1643, it ordered the collectors to learn whether they might

¹ Lord Brooke, Lord Howard of Escrigg, the Earl of Manchester, Lord Say and Sele, Lord Wharton, Sir William Brereton, Sir Thomas Middleton, Sir Thomas Soame, Sir Humphrey Vane, Jr., Walter Long, Edmund Prideaux, William Purefoy, John Pym, William Strode, Samuel Vassall, and Mr. Spurstow.

² Cal. Com. Adv. Money, vi. 88, 995.

³ *Ibid.*, 3, 12, 14.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vi.

not levy distress on those refusing to pay subscriptions,¹ and shortly afterward committees were appointed in the various counties for assessing those who had not contributed at all or had not made loans according to their estates or abilities.² These measures were preceded, however, by urgent appeals to the people in the vicinity of London. January 7, 1643, both Houses of Parliament issued a declaration showing the necessity of an immediate subscription of money or plate by the people in or near the metropolis for the use of the army. The sums were to be paid in four instalments within three months, in return for which public faith bills were to be given, with interest at 8 per cent.³ A week later orders were issued that this declaration should be read the following Sunday in the churches of London, Westminster, Southwark, and the suburbs, and the ministers were to exhort the people to subscribe with all expedition. As some ministers failed to comply, the committee issued an order on January 20 that these should obey the mandate on the following Sunday, and that those who had already read the order in their churches should do so again and exhort their parishioners to contribute. After this exhortation the common council in each parish was to take the subscription of as many as possible in church, and on the following day go to the houses of those who had not subscribed and receive their subscriptions. One-fourth of the amount was to be paid two days after the subscription, and one-fourth at the end of each month thereafter. Forms of entry and receipt of subscriptions were provided.⁴ Finally, on October 9, 1643, Parliament ordered that all its members who were absent with the king or under arms in his cause should be assessed for their fifth and twentieth parts, and in case of non-payment their estates were to be leased.⁵

The collection of the assessments seems to have been no

¹ Cal. Com. Adv. Money, 13, 14.

² Scobell, i. 41.

³ Lords' Journals, v. 533-535.

⁴ Cal. Com. Adv. Money, 11.

⁵ Scobell, i. 57-58.

easy task. The valuation of the estates for the assessments was made on the basis of what they would bring in a time of peace, and, as the disturbed conditions incident to the war had caused a decline in property values, this was nearly always too high. Seldom were the assessments fully paid. Mrs. Everett Green states that two account books of this time show that between June 24, 1643, and July 16, 1644, the receipts amounted to £260,306, and the unpaid balance to £1,418,299, or about six times as much.¹ A bundle of forty-six accounts returned unsettled by the assessment collectors contains a variety of answers of those assessed as to why they should not make payment,—they are overrated; they are unable to lend, having no money and being in debt themselves; they have already lent as much as they are able; they are unable to get in their own debts; they cannot pay at present, but will give bond for the sum; they will pay when the plate taken from them is returned; their trade is so decayed that they cannot earn money; they will “consider of it”; their conscience will not allow them to pay it.² If a person did not pay his assessment within ten days after the collector served him with a notice, he forfeited his right to a grant of the public faith. In case of refusal to pay, the estate was seized and held until the obligation was fulfilled, and the houses were either let or turned over to destitute persons.³ Very often the collectors found it impossible to deliver the notices, as the persons would leave their homes to dodge the officer, and the servants either would not know or would refuse to divulge information as to their masters’ whereabouts. Houses would often be closed to prevent the levy of a distrait. When a distress was levied, the committee gave the collectors an extra commission for their trouble, and charged all the expenses of the sale, including the extra commission, against the offender. Goods thus seized were sold at Guildhall “by the candle,” after being duly adver-

¹ See her introduction to the *Calendar of the Committee's Proceedings*, vii. ff.

² *Ibid.*, 30, 31.

³ See pp. 183, 238, 242, 303, 351, 383.

tised.¹ When there was no property to be distrained, persons assessed were sometimes taken into custody and held till they made payment.²

A sub-committee was appointed in June, 1643, for mitigating any assessments that seemed too high, and every Tuesday and Friday it sat at Haberdashers' Hall as a court of appeal from the assessments made by the local officers. The usual method was to take the affidavit of the complainant as to the amount of his property and his indebtedness before June, 1642, but on application the complainant could appear by counsel. To obtain a hearing, however, half the assessment was required to be deposited in advance, and, if the affidavit proved false, the affiant was condemned to pay the whole amount of the primary assessment. If the sub-committee agreed that the sum deposited was more or less than should be paid, he was reimbursed or required to make further payment, as the case might be. Any circumstances that might call for a mitigation were always taken into consideration. For example, Mrs. Mary Allison, a widow of Salisbury Court, had her assessment reduced on January 19, 1644, from £150 to £20, as her estate in Yorkshire was under the power of the king's army, and twelve grandchildren were chargeable to her for support.³ Numerous cases of this character appear, assessments being mitigated for services performed or supplies furnished for which no payment had been made, and for damages sustained through the quartering of troops or from injuries inflicted by the king's soldiers.⁴ When the persons were away from England, or when their estates were in the hands of the Royalist forces or had been sequestered for delinquency, respites were granted. The only persons exempt were those whose property was less than £100 in value, but well-disposed persons were sometimes allowed by Parliament or

¹ A certain John Fletcher, a large purchaser, and evidently in collusion with the auctioneers, was accused of standing near the candle and extinguishing it by waving his hand or blowing with his mouth at his last bid, when others might have bid higher. Cal Com. Adv. Money, 129.

² *Ibid.*, vii. 231, 270, 289.

³ *Ibid.*, ix. 326.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 182, 192, 254, 255, 247, 258, 311.

by the committee to make voluntary contributions instead of being assessed. The members of both Houses of Parliament and the attendants on the House of Lords were assessed by their colleagues in either House, and not by the committee. In case a person had previously lent money to Parliament, the amount was deducted from his assessment on the production of a receipt or an affidavit to the effect that the loan had not been cancelled by "doubling." This term refers to a practice of Parliament by which it cancelled obligations and at the same time collected additional revenue. When the holder of a public-faith bill presented it with a sum of money equal to its face value, he received an allotment of forfeited estates equal to the value of both the sums paid in; and, as this was the only certain way to secure the redemption of the government certificates of credit, the method was as advantageous to those who had lent large sums as it was to Parliament.¹

During the years 1643 and 1644 the Committee for the Advance of Money was occupied chiefly with the assessment of fifths and twentieths. In February, 1645, however, its jurisdiction was extended over cases against Royalists or delinquents who, in making their composition before the Committee for Compounding, had concealed part of their estate or solvent credits.² Ordinary informers who furnished the committee with information were entitled to one-fifth of the amount obtained as a result of their disclosures, and officers whose pay was in arrears were allowed anywhere from one-third to the whole of the amount—usually a half—so recovered. In thus dealing with its officers to whom it was indebted, the government received money and discharged its indebtedness at the same time. As was to be expected, such a system gave rise to grave abuses, and by April 29 it became necessary to issue an order that no one could furnish the committee with information without a recommendation from a member of Parliament countersigned by the Speaker. At length, on Au-

¹ Cal. Com. Adv. Money, xi.

² *Ibid.*, 41.

gust 8, 1650, Parliament issued an order requiring informers to give bond in the sum of £200 that they would carry thru their cases, and in the event of their dropping a case once begun, or taking payment to desist from prosecuting or suborning witnesses, they were to be imprisoned.¹

The nature of the work of the committee gradually changed. At first an organization for exacting forced loans from all persons of property, irrespective of party, the committee evolved into an organ for punishing by money penalties the enemies of the Commonwealth. To its duty of ferreting out the concealed property of delinquents, imposed in 1645, was added on August 6 of the following year the assessing of Royalists who had already compounded for their estates.² Nineteen days later the House restricted all assessments of fifths and twentieths to Royalists alone, or to those who had not as yet made any voluntary contribution to Parliament. The Parliamentary party was now gaining in strength, and could afford to relieve its supporters from undue money exactions, and throw one of the most disagreeable burdens on the delinquents alone. A source of complaint was the hazy way in which indictments were lodged against delinquents, making defence difficult. Accordingly, on June 18, 1651, it was ordered that, where charges of delinquency were made, specific acts and the time of their occurrence within a year must be specified, with the place, or the case would be dismissed.³ On June 5, 1648, it was enacted that assessments were henceforth to be imposed only on those delinquents who came within the ordinance of sequestrations, tho this act was not to prevent the collection of assessments already levied.⁴ These delinquents were to be assessed on the estates described by them in writing when they compounded at Goldsmiths' Hall. With this restriction the work of the committee was necessarily curtailed. The delinquents to be dealt with were

¹ Cal. Com. Adv. Money, 83.

² *Ibid.*, 56.

³ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 70.

not allowed within twenty miles of London, and it was difficult to make settlements with them except at the time they were escorted by guards to Goldsmiths' Hall to make composition for their estates; and, after doing this, they usually had very little left with which to pay their fifths and twentieths.

In April, 1650, the members of the Committee for the Advance of Money were dismissed, and its functions were taken over by the Committee for Compounding. The business of the two committees was from this time transacted by the same body of men, but was kept separate. The Committee for Sequestrations had already gone out of existence. The administrative machinery was now simplified, as the work that had formerly been intrusted to three committees was in the hands of one.

The complete overthrow of the Royalist party was followed by increased activity among the county commissioners charged with making the assessments outside London; and in the period from 1651 to 1653 reports were received by the central committee at London from committees in no fewer than thirty-seven counties,—an indication that the assessments were being levied on delinquents in nearly every part of England.¹ The Act of Pardon in December, 1651, contained the provision that all whose estates were not sequestered by December 1 were to receive discharges on their taking the engagement. Not only did this relieve great numbers from charges, but it caused much loss to those informers who had hired counsel to prosecute cases, as the informer's share was not paid until the money from the delinquent had actually been received.²

The issue of public-faith bills, except on special order, was suspended on June 23, 1652; and the suspension

¹ Cal. Com. Adv. Money, 88-110.

² Among the informers were a few worthy men, usually officers who could get pay for their services in no other way. As examples of these may be cited Colonels Hutchinson and Venn. Others had no idea but to gain at their neighbors' expense, and still others gave the information to gratify personal malice. *Ibid.*, xiii.

lasted till December 7 of the following year, when it was so modified that those who paid their assessments at the proper time and without the resort to a warrant or distress by the State were entitled to the public faith for repayment. Many took advantage of this order and secured certificates. After the establishment of the Protectorate, the duties of the Committee for the Advance of Money decreased in importance, and gradually came to an end, the functions being taken over by Cromwell. The last entry in its proceedings is dated May 14, 1656.

The Committee for the Advance of Money was not the most important of the numerous administrative bodies appointed by the Long Parliament, but its history is the most interesting as well as the most characteristic; and its period of activity corresponds closely in time with the life of the assembly to which it owed its origin. These facts seem to justify an account of its workings at some length. Somewhat harsher duties were imposed on the Committee for Sequestrations, of which we do not have very much information. On March 31, 1643, Parliament issued an order for the sequestration of delinquents' estates, naming as delinquent fourteen bishops "and all other persons ecclesiastical or temporal as have raised arms against Parliament or in actual warfare against the same or have contributed, when not under the power of the king's army, money, horse, plate, arms, munition, or other aid to the forces against Parliament, or for injuring in any way persons who have assisted the Parliament party." By sequestering as here employed was meant the seizure of the whole property of a delinquent, whose estate was to be let and his goods sold. There was to be a central committee at London, and a sub-committee in each county. The sequestrators were also to seize two-thirds of all the property that belonged to Papists or Recusants, or that was held in trust for them, and were empowered to receive the rents of the tenants of delinquents. Such tenants were to be protected and "saved harmless" from any forfeiture, penalty, or damage on account of

paying their rents to the sequestrators.¹ On August 19 Parliament prescribed an iron-clad oath for suspected Recusants,² who, in the event of their being unable to take it, were to forfeit two-thirds of their property. The goods were to be sold by the candle, and one shilling of every pound, or 5 per cent., was to go to the informer. In the case of delinquents, one-fifth of the estate was left intact for the wife and children. Four treasurers were appointed to receive the funds at Guildhall.³

The activity of the sequestrators varied according to the strength of the Parliamentary party in the different counties. Where this power was strong, the delinquents were at the mercy of their opponents. Their estates were seized and let at low rates to the members of the county committees or their friends, and their rights to a fifth of the property were often ignored. The result was that the delinquents suffered heavily, while the State got very little. On the other hand, where the Royalists were strongly intrenched, it was difficult to get responsible men to act as sequestrators.⁴ In Wales it was found impossible to reach individual delinquents by means of sequestration committees, so strong was the Royalist feeling, and at length a general delinquency tax was imposed, February 23, 1649, on the county of Monmouth and the various counties of South Wales. A tax of £20,500 was to be apportioned and collected in two equal amounts

¹ Scobell, i. 37.

² The oath was as follows: I, A. B., do abjure and renounce the Popes Supremacy and Authority over the Catholic Church in General and over myself in Particular; and I do believe that there is not any Transubstantiation in the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, or in the Elements of Bread and Wine after the Consecration thereof, by any person whatsoever; And I do also believe, that there is not any Purgatory, Or that the consecrated Hoast, Crucifixes, or Images, ought to be worshipped, or that any worship is due unto any of them; And I also believe that Salvation cannot be Merited by Works, and all Doctrines in affirmation of the said Points I do abjure and renounce, without any equivocation, Mental Reservation, or secret Evasion whatsoever, taking the Words by me spoken, according to the common and usual meaning of them. *So help me God.*

³ Scobell, i. 49-52.

⁴ Mrs. Green, in her introduction to the Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, 1649-50, viii. Referred to hereafter as C. S. P., Dom.

at intervals of ten weeks from the minor delinquents, who were henceforth to be freed from sequestration. The more important delinquents, including all who were excepted from pardon in the proposition submitted to Charles I. at Hampton Court, and all clergymen and prisoners of war, were not to pay this tax, but were reserved for special treatment. All persons worth less than £100 of personalty, or £8 a year, were to be exempt.¹ On August 10 Parliament extended the same arrangement to the six counties of North Wales.²

The functions of the Committee for Sequestrations were in a few years completely superseded by the work of a body of men who constituted the most important of the many committees called into existence under the régime of Parliament. This was the Committee for Compounding. Tho it developed into a highly important part of the financial administration of the Commonwealth, it had an humble origin. On September 28, 1643, after the Scotch army in Ireland began to make more and more insistent demands for pay, the House of Commons appointed a committee to confer with a similar body to be chosen by the Lord Mayor and Common Council of London as to the best means of negotiating loans to pay the Scots, and to agree upon some satisfactory security for the sums lent.³ The committee at first had two functions,—to raise money and to disburse it to the Scots. Those whose duty it was to negotiate loans were called the Goldsmiths' Hall Committee, while those who did the disbursing were called at first the Committee for Scottish Affairs,—a name, however, that soon fell into disuse, and the name of Goldsmiths' Hall Committee then designated both the receivers and the dispensers of the loans. The warrants issued by the committee show that considerable sums were sent to "our brethren of Scotland for assistance in the war."⁴

¹ C. S. P., Dom., 1649-50, 13.

² *Ibid.*, 271.

³ Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee for Compounding, 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, i, 778 ff.

At first the committee was occupied only with presenting the names of persons in London and Westminster who, they thought, could make loans to Parliament; but in July, 1644, they began their dealing with delinquents, which was henceforth their particular function, and they consequently supplanted the Committee for Sequestrations. At first, however, they did not prosecute delinquents as the sequestrators did, but merely authorized the sale, at six or eight years' purchase, of estates already sequestered. It was stipulated that the rates should always be the same as those the estates were rented for before the war began.¹ August 6, 1644, the committee began compounding with those imprisoned in and around London, and also with those whose estates were already sequestered, and who were willing to save part of them by a composition.² September 13, 1644, owing to the necessity of speedily raising £15,000 for a month's pay for Lord Fairfax's army, the House of Commons ordered a general composition with all those it had proclaimed as delinquents, and the activities of the committee were greatly increased.³ As the Goldsmiths' Hall Committee acted directly with the delinquents themselves, and not through sub-committees in the counties, its work was free from many of the abuses attending the operations of the county sequestrators. The delinquents were allowed to enter London on a pass issued by the Speaker, and on reaching the city were escorted by guards directly to Goldsmiths' Hall, where they compounded for their estates according to the nature of their offence. Those who had taken part in one of the wars were required to compound for a sixth; that is, they were fined to the amount of one-sixth of their estates. Those who had taken part in both wars compounded for a third, and delinquent members

¹ Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee for Compounding, 7.

² *Ibid.*, 8.

³ *Ibid.*, 10. An order by the committee on September 20 shows that it was the intention of the Commons to restrict the compositions to those it had declared delinquents, tho the order of the House does not make any definite statement to this effect.

of Parliament for a half. In case the delinquent had been in a city that surrendered to the Parliamentary forces, he made his composition in accordance with the terms of capitulation.¹

March 3, 1645, the committee declared to Parliament that no better means of raising money existed than that of composition with delinquents; and three days later it asked that, instead of being confined to the consideration of cases recommended by particular orders, it should have the power to compound with any delinquents who should offer to make direct composition, the proceedings to have the approval of the House of Commons before being definitely concluded.² This request was granted, and the committee consequently received a much wider scope of action. At first the word of the compounder as to the value of his estate was not accepted, and he was required to bring in a certificate of the value signed by the county commissioners.³ On December 6, 1645, however, this requirement was repealed by Parliament, owing to the inconvenience it caused those who had estates in several counties,⁴ and on the 13th it was enacted that in case a delinquent were found guilty of undervaluing his estate or concealing part of it the amount of his composition should be doubled, and he should forfeit the personalty concealed. On June 13, 1648, this rule was modified, so that a payment of half the value of the concealed property was allowed to redeem it, and a reward of one shilling in the pound was to go to the discoverer.⁵ The sequestrators in the counties gave the committee some trouble by refusing to discharge the sequestrations of the compounders' estates, when ordered to do so.⁶ Those who compounded were not subject to sequestration, and were released from any proceedings that had already begun in this direction.

It will be observed that, when the estate of a Royalist was sequestered, he was fortunate to be able to retain

¹ C. S. P., Dom., 1649-50, ix.

² Cal. of Com. for Comp., 17, 18.

³ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 125.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 23.

a fifth, but, if he went into the city and made composition at Goldsmiths' Hall, he was merely fined a sixth, a third, or a half of his property, according to the nature of his delinquency. The Royalists, therefore, had an advantage in the new method of the State in collecting revenue from them. But the advantage was not with them alone. The State also profited. In the first place the money was paid directly into the treasury in London, and there was no chance for it to disappear in the pockets of county officials. In the second place there was no necessity of proving delinquency,—the fact that a person went before the committee and offered to compound being sufficient proof,—and hence no delays from litigation. Thus the delinquents received milder treatment, and the State made easier and quicker collections than thru the two devices previously described. The number of compounders was enormous, and would possibly have been somewhat larger but for the fact that, as soon as a person made composition at Goldsmiths' Hall, he was sent straight to Haberdashers' Hall to pay his fifth and twentieth.¹ According to Mrs. Green, the total amount compounded in eight years was £1,304,957, a sum equivalent to-day to five million pounds; and this does not include the estates of the wealthiest Royalists or of those remaining abroad, the property of these being confiscated by the Committee for Sequestrations.² Advowsons, too, were not subject to composition, but were reserved for the disposal of Parliament.³ In the northern counties it was found necessary to send a special commission to compound with the delinquents, and Sir Arthur Hesilrigge and others were despatched thither to perform this duty in the summer and autumn of 1649.⁴ In 1650 the members of the Committee for Compounding took over the functions of the Committee for the Advance of Money, and con-

¹ Statement of Sir David Watkins, Cal. of Com. for Comp., 23.

² C. S. P., Dom., 1649–50, xi.

³ Cal. of Com. for Comp., 32.

⁴ C. S. P., Dom., 1649–50, xxvii.

tinued their work, tho in a diminishing degree, under the Protectorate.

There were a number of committees of minor importance, of which we have less complete information. The Committee for Plundered Ministers (1645-53) was created for the purpose of increasing the income of neighboring loyal ministers from the revenues derived from the rectories, tithes, and estates of delinquent clergy.¹ The Committee for Indemnity (1649-56) was charged with protecting against the legal consequences of their acts those who for the service of the State had made requisitions of horses and goods, had damaged lands or crops, or had taken free quarter. It could suspend the action of the law in all cases where it was proved that the violation was done in the service of Parliament. As it could compel landlords to deduct from their tenants' rent the amounts the latter had paid for assessments or for freedom from quartering,² it greatly aided in the collection of these charges. A further duty was to protect the purchasers of sequestered estates against the original owners.³ The Army Committee had a great control over expenditures; but its records, such as exist, are not yet available.⁴ The same is true of the Committee for taking the Accounts of the Kingdom, which looked into the accounts of all persons who handled public moneys.⁵ There were also a Mint Committee, a Revenue Committee, a Committee for removing Obstructions in the Sale of Delinquents' Lands, and a Committee of Trustees for the Sale of Fee-farm or Crown Lands, the titles of which sufficiently explain their functions.

The revenue from the fifths and twentieths and from

¹ C. S. P., Dom., 1649-50, xi.

² With regard to payments to secure freedom from the quartering of troops, it should be stated that the county of Lincoln in May, 1649, levied a special assessment on its citizens in order to secure them exemption from billeting. Whether this expedient was generally employed elsewhere, I have not been able to determine. See C. S. P., Dom., 1649-50, 150.

³ *Ibid.*, xi.

⁴ Cal. Com. Adv. of Money, i.

⁵ See Scobell, i. 62-64.

the estates of delinquents was insufficient for the extraordinary expenditures occasioned by the Civil War, and it became necessary to resort to taxation. The old system of subsidies was tried at first. As this proved inadequate, Parliament resorted to a plan that had been advocated by Charles I.,—the apportioned tax commonly known as the monthly assessment. The amount of revenue to be raised was apportioned among the counties and towns on the basis of their highest returns under the old subsidy system. Each local unit was made responsible for its share; and the levying and collection were left with the local authorities, who proceeded in accordance with certain rules stated in the ordinance levying the tax. It should be observed, then, that, while the assessments made by the Committee for the Advance of Money were rated (that is, every one paid at the same rate), the monthly assessments might be levied at different rates in different counties, the ratio varying as the county's portion was light or heavy as compared with its neighbors. Under the system of subsidies the burden of the tax fell on the landholders. The assessments were intended to reach all kinds of property equally, and for a time may have been an improvement; but their justice depended, as in the case of all apportioned taxes, on the fairness with which they were apportioned among the counties. The former returns of the old subsidies were by no means an ideal basis of distribution. As an apportioned tax, however, it had the advantage of securing a fixed sum for the treasury, regardless of the rates levied in the various counties. The monthly sums assessed and the periods covered by them were as follows:—

1. £10,000, from September, 1644, to June, 1647.
2. £60,000, from July, 1647, to March, 1648–49.¹
3. £20,000, from February, 1647–48, to July, 1648.
4. £90,000, from April, 1649, to March, 1649–50.
5. £60,000, from April, 1650, to June, 1650.

¹ The legal year in this period came to a close in March, and this has to be borne constantly in mind to avoid confusion of dates.

6. £90,000, from July, 1650, to September, 1650.
7. £60,000, from October, 1650, to December, 1650.
8. £120,000, from January, 1650–51, to December, 1651.¹
9. £90,000, from January, 1651–52, to December, 1652.¹
10. £120,000, from January, 1652–53, to May, 1654.

The assessments were levied to cover military expenditures, and always for short periods, being renewed at intervals of from three to six months, sometimes for the same amount and sometimes for a larger or smaller sum, as the needs of the army and navy seemed to demand.² From the short period for which each assessment was levied, it appears to have been the intention of Parliament to remove this form of taxation at the earliest moment; but such a measure never became practicable.

The monthly assessments proved wholly inadequate to meet the expenses of the military equipment, and other measures were resorted to. On April 12, 1649, before Cromwell's invasion of Ireland, Parliament sent a committee before the citizens of London, and urged them to make a loan. The mission was unsuccessful.³ It was then necessary to resort to a sale of Deans' and Chapters' lands, a resource not yet tried, and accordingly on April 30 an act for the abolition of Deans and Chapters was passed, as the preliminary step.⁴ To stimulate the sale, persons who had formerly made loans were allowed the privilege of doubling. Lands of the king and royal family were likewise disposed of, and such sales secured the political advantage by strengthening the purchasers in their adherence to the government. The king's art treasures—a collection of Titians and Vandykes—were disposed of, and some fanatics in Parliament even advocated a demolition of the cathedrals, that the building materials in them might be disposed of for revenue.⁵

¹ One year.

² See Scobell, i. 74, 128, 144, 180; ii. 8, 71, 149, 154, 175, 177, 192, 226, 235, 272. Commons' Journals, iii. 666.

³ Gardiner, *Commonwealth and Protectorate*, i. 44.

⁴ *Ibid.*, i. 55; Commons' Journals, vi. 198.

⁵ Gardiner, i. 418.

Indirect taxes were laid during the same time. In the customs duties there was no marked departure from the practice preceding the Civil War. The great innovation was the introduction of internal revenue duties, or the excise, March 28, 1643. Ale, beer, cider, perry, and strong waters were among the articles taxed, and others were added the following year,—flesh, victuals, salt, in January; and, in July, alum, copperas, Monmouth caps, hats, hops, saffron, silks, starch, etc.¹ As was the case with the monthly assessments, the excise was imposed at first for a limited time, but it was necessary to continue it by various ordinances,² and finally, in 1656, a schedule of rates was established. It is difficult to compare the customs duties on foreign goods with the internal duties on native commodities, owing to the different units of rating. The excise tax was lower than the import duty, however, as can be shown whenever a comparison is possible. For example, foreign hops paid ten shillings the ton, and English hops only two shillings; foreign soap six shillings the hundred-weight, and English soap only four shillings per barrel. From November 15, 1643, to August 28, 1647, the excise was imposed on flesh, and this was one of the most unpopular features of the measure. After this was repealed and Englishmen had become accustomed to the excise, Parliament declared the tax "the most equal and indifferent that could be laid on the people." Nevertheless, as late as 1652 there were outbreaks in Wales, when the officers sought to collect the excise, and in Plymouth also, about the same time, the officials received abusive treatment.³

The central office for the collection of the excise was situated in London, and commissioners of excise were appointed by Parliament. Subordinate officers were chosen for various parts of England and Wales. In September, 1649, the commissioners were empowered to farm the excise,

¹ Dowell, *History of Taxation*, ii. 9; Scobell, i. 49, 59, 60, 73.

² Scobell, i. 68, 74, 75, 98; ii. 72, 452-457; Dowell, ii. 9-11.

³ C. S. P., Dom., 1651-52, 396, 445-447.

and a number of records survive showing how this was done. On April 5, 1653, the excise on all inland commodities in the North Riding of York was farmed for £730,¹ and the county of Dorset (certain towns being excepted) for £900, both for a term of six months. On April 8 the county of Essex was farmed for £3,405; Cambridge and Huntingdon combined for £3,000; and Norfolk, including Norwich and the suburbs of Thetford in Suffolk County, for a quarter of a year for £2,000.² The administration of the excise gave ground for complaint by many who thought it antagonistic to the liberties of Englishmen, and pamphleteers attacked it even as late as the second year of the Protectorate.³ The revenue from the excise tax was devoted in great part to provisioning the army, and was thus an important supplement to the proceeds from the monthly assessments, which furnished a part of the pay for officers and men.

For the purpose of raising auxiliaries, a weekly meal tax, the price of one meal a week, was levied for six years during the Commonwealth period, and produced a total revenue of £608,400.⁴

Taxes and expenditures under the Long Parliament reached an unheard of figure, in spite of the fact that the Parliamentary party in the beginning had raised its voice against oppressive taxation. The unsettled state of affairs at home, the invasion of Ireland in 1649, the threatening attitude of Scotland, the naval struggle with Holland, all necessitated strong and well-equipped military and naval establishments and extraordinary disbursements from the national purse. There is no complete statement available of the expenditures of the period, but an estimate of the military and naval expenses for the year 1649, made by a member of Parliament, places the amount at a little over

¹ C. S. P., Dom., 1652-53, 252.

² *Ibid.*, 270.

³ The following is the title of a pamphlet issued at London in 1654 by William Prynne: *A declaration and protestation against the illegal, detestable, oft-condemned new tax and extortion of excise in general, and for hops (a native uncertain commodity) in particular.*

⁴ Stevens, *History of Taxes*, 290.

£2,500,000.¹ In the budget for the year 1610, under the extravagant monarch James I., the total amount for all purposes was £509,000, and under Charles I., in 1635, was £818,000, including the estimate for ship money. A comparison of these figures will give some idea of the enormous increase under Parliamentary rule, largely due, however, to circumstances entirely beyond the control of any legislative body.

After 1649 all the warrants for the payment of money were issued by the direct authority of the Council of State, and for this year the support of the war in Ireland formed by far the largest item of expenditure.² From March 7, 1649, to February 15, 1650, 491 warrants were issued, and 249 of these are explicitly stated to be for the purpose of carrying on the war in Ireland, while a good part of the rest were for military purposes, tho it is not expressly stated that they are issued for the service in Ireland.

A word is now necessary with regard to the state of the treasury in this period. From the outbreak of the Civil War till Cromwell's dissolution of the Long Parliament it was in confusion. The receipts from each special source were credited to a separate fund, and each fund had its own treasurer or treasurers, thus entailing extra labor and expense and greatly complicating the financial administration. In the years 1649-1650 there were no fewer than ten funds, as follows: Goldsmiths' Hall Fund, consisting of the proceeds arising from the work of the Committee for Compounding; the Old Ordinances for Ireland Fund, raised by weekly assessments of £10,000 per month; the Public Revenue Fund, composed of what was once the king's revenue; the Delinquents' Estates Fund, raised from the estates of delinquents by order of Parliament; Deans' and Chapters' Lands Fund, one-third of which was reserved for the navy, one-third for exigencies, and one-third for Ireland; the Ordinance for Ireland Fund, raised by monthly assessments of £20,000 a month; the Army Treasury Fund, the

¹ Commons' Journals, vi. 467.

² C. S. P., Dom., 1649-50, 572-600.

proceeds of the assessment of £90,000 per month for the army in England and Ireland; the Excise Fund, being £150,000 reserved from the excise receipts for the payment of arrears due officers and soldiers, by order of Parliament, May 28, 1647; the fund at the disposal of the Council of State; and the fund raised by the sale of prize ships and goods.¹ As every warrant was assigned to a particular fund, the chances of its being paid promptly depended on the condition of that fund. After its issue a warrant was often transferred to another fund in order to secure its payment, and this added to the confusion. Large sums, too, were sometimes transferred directly from one fund to another. As a result, tho the warrants for the payment of money have been made accessible, the numerous orders for transfers, which represent no real disbursement, but are included with the other warrants and cannot always be separated from them, make it impossible to give any accurate statement as to the condition of the treasury at any given period. The numerous subdivisions of the treasury facilitated fraud as well as increased expenses. One Abraham Granger originated a system of counterfeiting warrants, and after his arrest in 1654 confessed that he had circulated spurious debentures and public faith bills, and had secured moneys at the treasuries by means of bogus warrants. He and his agents had issued \$235,000 in debentures.²

Such a cumbrous system demanded reform, and there were numerous unsuccessful efforts in this direction. A committee was appointed by the Council of State on June 16, 1649, "to consider how the treasury of the Commonwealth could be run in one channel,"³ and on November 15 an act with this end in view was prepared by the Council, and ordered to be read before the House.⁴ Nothing was done. Three years later, on September 30, 1652, the Council deputed a member to go before the Commons and remind

¹ C. S. P., Dom., 1649-50, xxxi. ff.

² C. S. P., Dom., 1654, ix. 415-419.

³ *Ibid.* 1649-50, 188.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 394.

them of the distracted state of the treasury, and of a bill pending for a remedy.¹ Not, however, till Cromwell dissolved the Parliament was the needed reform effected. On June 21, 1654, an ordinance of the Protector and Council provided for the bringing of all the revenues of the Commonwealth into a single treasury, the Exchequer at Westminster. Henceforth all commissioners, treasurers, and trustees were to make payments at the Exchequer, and disbursements were to be made by warrant of the great or privy seal.² Finally, on September 2, treasury commissioners were appointed to look after the funds paid into the Exchequer, and to lease lands, fix rents, pay salaries, dismiss officers not needed, and fix the pay of those not specially provided for the Protector and Council.³ A large number of high-salaried officers was thus done away with.

The other important financial measures of this period concern the post-office and the mint. In 1646 the courts declared the royal patent giving a monopoly of the post void, and in May the management of the inland post was placed in the hands of Attorney-General Prideaux, who was held responsible for the profits and was to give a quarterly account.⁴ Nothing further was done, till November 7, 1651, when the Council of State decided that the office should be let to farm. Various proposals were offered, and the consideration of these dragged on for many weary months. In the mean time a private firm, taking courage from the decision of the courts, had established an independent post, and was carrying letters cheaper than was done under the royal monopoly. There were now two competing posts, and a good deal of friction sprang up between the competitors, which often led to violence. On several occasions the employees of one company were waylaid by the servants of the other, and rioting and bloodshed resulted. Prideaux, it appears, finally gave up the management of the post, and on June 30, 1653, it was farmed to

¹ C. S. P., Dom., 1652, 423 ff.

² *Ibid.*, 1654, 215-216.

³ *Ibid.*, 356.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1654, 22 ff.

John Manley for £8,259,193. The other offers ranged between eight and ten thousand pounds. Manley was required to carry all public despatches free, to make quarterly payments, and to keep up a weekly intercourse between England and Ireland.¹

The mint also was in great disorder. There was much complaint of counterfeiting and of light and clipped money being sent to Ireland.² An English merchant in 1652, writing from Amsterdam to Sir Robert Stone in London, paints a dismal picture of English monetary matters, the bad state of affairs being due, he says, to counterfeiting and clipping. He states that it is of common report that a greater amount of the new coinage had been counterfeited than had been coined by the government. When the garrisons of the king at Bristol, Shrewsbury, York, Oxford, and Carlisle surrendered, the machinery of the mints of these places fell into the hands of adventurers, who made a counterfeit coin by melting silver and pewter dishes.³ In 1652 the Council made an improvement by adopting a style of coin submitted by Pierre Blondeau, a Frenchman. Blondeau's coin was marked on the edge so as to prevent clipping and filing, and was accepted in spite of the protests of the Englishmen in the mint, who were unable to copy his model.⁴

Such are some of the salient features of financial administration under the Long Parliament. A number of the enactments by this body have proved of lasting effect on the English system of State housekeeping. The sequestration of the Royalist estates was a potent factor in accomplishing the abolition of feudal aids after the Restoration. The excise, in spite of the storm of opposition it had once evoked, was retained when royalty was restored to power,—a good indication that it was an efficient means of gathering revenue. Tho the monthly assessments were discontinued

¹ C. S. P., Dom., 1652-53, xxi. 449-455.

² *Ibid.*, 1651-52, xxv. 153-157.

³ *Ibid.*, 1651-52, 260-63.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 154-157.

at this time, they received a new trial a few months later.¹ The fact that the innovations made in fiscal administration during the period of the Commonwealth were not set aside with the fall of the Protectorate would seem to indicate that the new system was satisfactory, or at least that no better one could be devised. The substitution of the assessments for the subsidies was a step in the advance from mediæval to modern methods of taxation. Yet neither in this measure nor in the introduction of the excise did Parliament show any originality. As already stated, the monthly assessment had been proposed by Charles I., and the excise was at that time common to all parts of Europe. The administration of the Long Parliament cannot be called economical, but political circumstances necessitated extraordinary expenditures. It has become a maxim, too, that a people will endure taxes imposed by a representative body at its own initiative which they would not tolerate for a moment under an absolute monarchy. To this rule the financial history of the Commonwealth offers no exception.

WILLIAM O. SCROGGS.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

¹ For an account of the financial measures of the reign of Charles II., see an article by W. A. Shaw, entitled "The Beginnings of the National Debt," in *Historical Essays by Members of the Owens College*, 1902, pp. 391-422.